

Almost anything - newspaper, other printed matter, television, radio and in today's modern world, the ever-present world-wide-web and mobile phones - can be media, as long as they get the message across.

The message of the Media Kit is that agriculture, and all the livelihoods and businesses, social life and environmental services that it supports needs to be promoted and communicated. An important function of this communication is that it is not 'incestuous', i.e., we in the agriculture community must stop talking to ourselves and engage and communicate with other economic sectors and the wider public.

Why is this expanded communication necessary? Because 'what you don't know **does** hurt' and 'ignorance is **not** bliss'!

The Media Kit seeks to put issues relevant to agricultural development 'out there' in the wider public through journalists and communicators, to promote better understanding and interest in agriculture's issue.

Essentially, to keep agriculture in the news, in full view and front and centre stage of the public agenda so as to stimulate a 'groundswell' of individuals and institutions that are so moved to make a difference, independently and collectively, in the situation of agriculture.

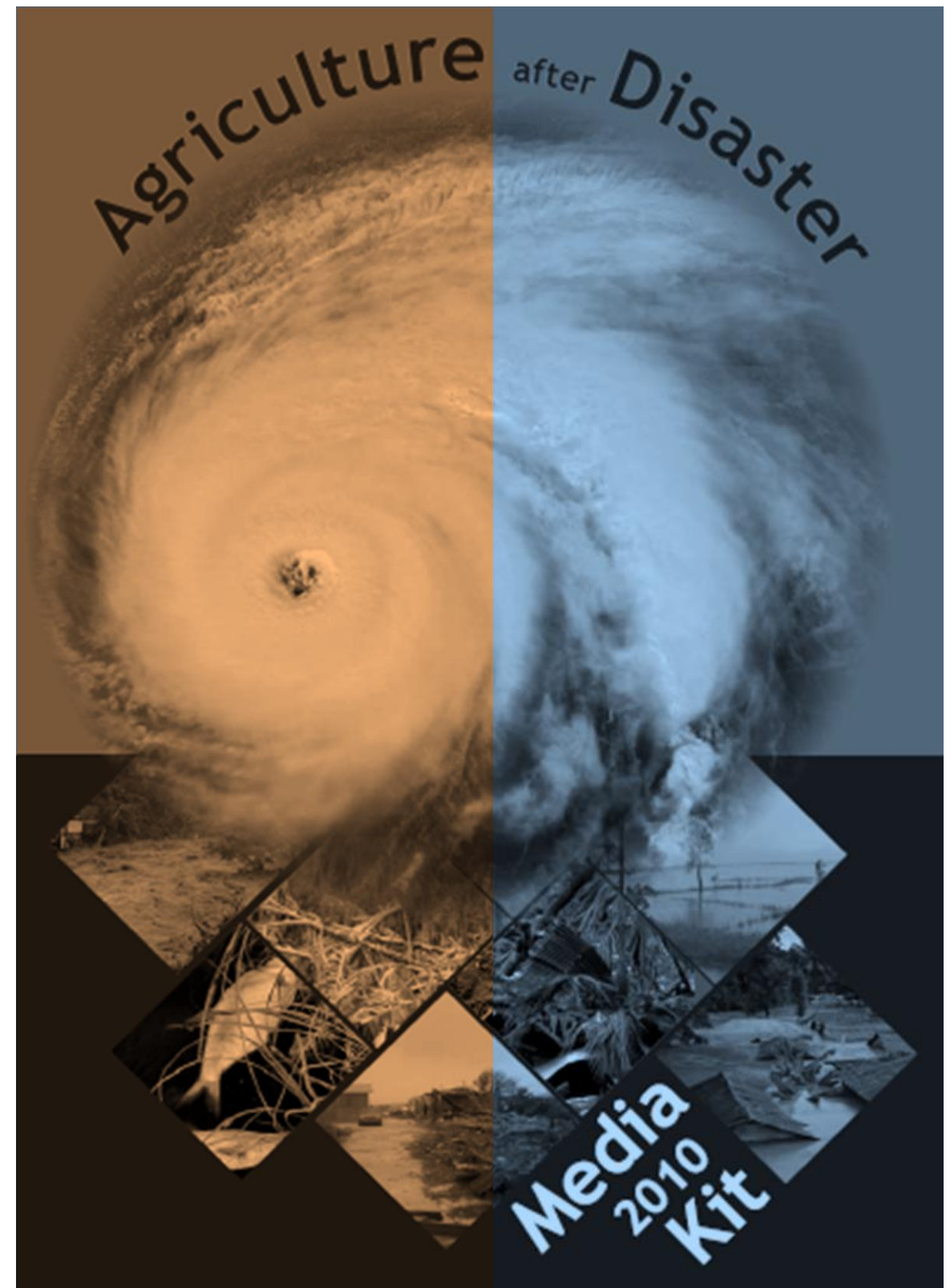
IICA and the CTA, through the CaRAPN project, commit to facilitating by providing the information. The rest is up to you!



Caribbean Regional Agriculture Policy Network



June 2010



Agriculture *after* Disaster

In the 2009 – 2010 period, although the region was generally spared the wrath of hurricanes, disaster risk management (DRM) featured prominently in dialogue at all levels. Fresh memories of past disaster years, a severe drought in the last quarter of 2009 that continued in 2010 and the shock of a devastating earthquake in Haiti provided impetus to take preemptive action to reduce vulnerabilities and strengthen DRM capabilities in the region, including in agriculture.

This media kit highlights issues related to natural hazards, their associated disasters and the impact on and role of agriculture in relief and recovery.

The five inter-related briefs are:

1. Natural hazards, disasters and agricultural impacts highlights agriculture's vulnerabilities to natural hazards, the costs of associated disasters and the consequent risks to development.
2. Managing development amidst natural hazards recognizes the importance of forward planning and good practices in mitigating losses and accelerating recovery in agriculture.
3. Fast tracking Recovery –prioritizing agriculture calls for greater focus on resuscitating agriculture after disaster since it is perhaps the only productive sector that can be reactivated with the least delay to meet food needs and stabilize rural economies. Such relief and recovery efforts must also foster institutional coordination to give priority to the national agenda versus individual agency agendas
4. Securing food supplies after disaster acknowledges that while emergency food aid is an important aspect of disaster relief, it must be understood by all, to be a temporary measure and no effort should be spared in rebuilding national food production capacity.
5. Disaster, agriculture and media response emphasizes the need for balanced and responsible reporting that goes beyond images of human suffering and infrastructure destruction to issues that promote the need for focused and coordinated action to accelerate recovery of productive sectors, including and importantly, agriculture.



Emergency relief is like helping people who have fallen over a cliff; longer term agricultural development provides a fence that stops them from falling in the first place'. (IRRI 2008)¹

Natural hazards, such as, hurricanes and earthquakes, are inherent in the environment and can lead to widespread human, infrastructural, economic and environmental losses from an event. In some instances, some of these natural hazards can be managed through good forward planning and good practices. However, in other instances, such as in earthquakes, coping or mitigation strategies may not be sufficient.

Because agriculture relies on natural resources, it is easily impacted by natural events which could lead to disasters. Agricultural impacts from natural events and disasters most commonly include: contamination of water bodies, loss of harvest or livestock, increased susceptibility to disease, and destruction of irrigation systems and other agricultural infrastructure. The importance of relief and recovery support for agriculture after disaster is important to contributing to restoration of economic activity and food security.

¹ (International Rice Research Institute in the Philippines (IRRI) scientist, T.P. Tuong, from Bangladesh: Rice Holds its Breath. On Country Water Action: Asia Rice Science Advances Reforms October 2008) <http://www.adb.org/Water/Actions/reg/science-advances-reforms.asp>